

NEWS

Date: August 13, 2005

Contact: Dave Fotsch, Public Information Officer
(208) 327-8639 / Cell: (208) 871-1712

FIRST HUMAN CASE OF WEST NILE VIRUS REPORTED IN ADA COUNTY

The Central District Health Department (CDHD) is reporting the first confirmed human case of West Nile Virus in Idaho this year. The 58-year-old male, a resident of Ada County, is a truck driver whose route often takes him to California and Nevada. He was tested on August 9, 2005 after exhibiting symptoms consistent with West Nile Virus for up to two weeks prior to being tested. The man is not hospitalized and is recovering well from the illness.

To date almost every state in the U.S. is now reporting at least veterinary cases of West Nile Virus. Nationwide there have been 187 human cases and 3 human deaths reported between June 20th and August 9, 2005. California is currently reporting the highest number of human cases, followed by South Dakota.

Prior to this human case, Idaho has reported nine positive horse cases of West Nile Virus in Canyon, Gooding, Owyhee and Gem counties. Positive mosquito tests have been reported out of Canyon and Payette counties. And birds testing positive for the West Nile Virus have been confirmed in Canyon and Gem counties.

– MORE –

WEST NILE HUMAN CASE – ADD ONE

People and animals are infected with the West Nile Virus through the bite of an infected mosquito, and cannot contract the virus from contact with an infected animal or person. The virus is spread by migrating infected birds, which are bitten by mosquitoes. The infected mosquitoes can then pass the virus on to people and other animals.

Most people infected with the West Nile Virus have no symptoms or will only have a mild flu-like illness. Common symptoms of infection include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, eye pain, skin rash, and enlarged lymph nodes. But in a small percentage of the population the virus can lead to serious illness requiring hospitalization, especially in people over the age of 50.

To protect themselves, people are advised to:

- Insect-proof their homes by repairing or replacing screens;
- Reduce standing water on their property that provides mosquito breeding habitat, such as bird baths and decorative ponds;
- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors;
- Apply insect repellent approved by the EPA to exposed skin and clothing. Follow instructions on the product label, especially for children;
- Avoid mosquitoes when they are most active between dusk and dawn; and
- Report dead birds to your local Fish and Game office.

Additional information about the virus is available from the Central District Health Department website at www.cdhd.idaho.gov or by calling 208-327-8625. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare web site also offers information on West Nile Virus at <http://www.westnile.idaho.gov>.

#####